

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-6 (canceled)

7. (currently amended) A method of continuously separating whole blood, comprising:
- providing a container having a flexible top sheet, a fluid receiving port, a fluid discharge port, and a plurality of compartments fluidly coupled to at least one of the fluid receiving port and the fluid discharge port, and wherein at least two of the plurality of compartments are in fluid communication with the fluid discharge port;
- introducing a continuous flow of whole blood into the fluid receiving port while at the same time emitting a continuous flow of processed whole blood that is at least partially depleted of a target antigen;
- wherein the target antigen is separated from the whole blood within at least one of the plurality of compartments using a magnetic force and an automatic mechanical force, wherein at least one of the magnetic force and automatic mechanical force is transmitted through the flexible top sheet;
- wherein at least one of the compartments further comprises a plurality of magnetic beads that carry an affinity marker that binds the target antigen;
- wherein a plurality of actuators in a device retaining the container compress at least some of the compartments in a predetermined manner to thereby move the whole blood and the processed whole blood through the plurality of compartments; and
- wherein the entire container is flexible and fabricated from a flexible top sheet and a flexible bottom sheet.

8. (canceled)
9. (previously presented) The method of claim 7 wherein a plurality of compartments and fluid conduits that fluidly couple one compartment to another compartment are formed by the top and bottom sheet.
10. (previously presented) The method of claim 7 wherein at least one of the compartments further includes a port that allows draining of the at least one of the compartments.
11. (canceled)
12. (previously presented) The method of claim 7 wherein at least one of the compartments or a conduit that fluidly couples one compartment to another compartment is configured such that an actuator can compress the at least one of the compartments or conduit to partially or completely stop flow of the whole blood or processed whole blood through the conduit or compartment.
13. (previously presented) The method of claim 7 wherein at least one of the compartments includes a fluid selected from the group consisting of a buffer, a wash fluid, an isotonic fluid, and an elution fluid.
14. (previously presented) The method of claim 7 wherein the affinity marker is selected from the group consisting of an antibody, an antibody fragment, and a lectin.
15. (currently amended) A method of continuously separating whole blood, comprising:

providing a container that is flexible and that is fabricated from a flexible top sheet and a flexible bottom sheet;

wherein the container has a fluid receiving port, a fluid discharge port, and a plurality of compartments fluidly coupled to at least one of the fluid receiving port and the fluid discharge port, and wherein at least two of the plurality of compartments are in fluid communication with the fluid discharge port;

introducing whole blood into the fluid receiving port and emitting processed whole blood from the fluid discharge port, wherein the processed whole blood is at least partially depleted of a target antigen;

wherein the target antigen is separated from the whole blood within at least one of the plurality of compartments using a magnetic force and an automatic mechanical force, wherein at least one of the magnetic force and automatic mechanical force is transmitted through the flexible top sheet;

wherein at least one of the compartments further comprises a plurality of magnetic beads that carry an affinity marker that binds the target antigen; and

wherein a plurality of actuators in a device retaining the container compress at least some of the compartments in a predetermined manner to thereby move the whole blood and the processed whole blood through the plurality of compartments.

16. (previously presented) The method of claim 15 wherein a plurality of compartments and fluid conduits that fluidly couple one compartment to another compartment are formed by the top and bottom sheet
17. (previously presented) The method of claim 15 wherein at least one of the compartments further includes a port that allows draining of the at least one of the compartments.
18. (previously presented) The method of claim 15 wherein at least one of the compartments or a conduit that fluidly couples one compartment to another compartment is configured such that an actuator can compress the at least one of the compartments or conduit to partially or completely stop flow of the whole blood or processed whole blood through the conduit or compartment.
19. (previously presented) The method of claim 15 wherein at least one of the compartments includes a fluid selected from the group consisting of a buffer, a wash fluid, an isotonic fluid, and an elution fluid.

Appl. No. 09/977,930
Amdt. dated Nov. 20, 2006
Reply to Office action of Sep. 22, 2006

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 15 wherein the affinity marker is selected from the group consisting of an antibody, an antibody fragment, and a lectin.